



**Connecticut
Light & Power**

The Northeast Utilities System



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**TESTIMONY OF RICHARD A. SODERMAN
THE CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY
and YANKEE GAS SERVICES COMPANY**

**Energy and Technology Committee
February 24, 2011**

***Re: H.B. No. 6405 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF SERIOUSLY ILL
UTILITY CUSTOMERS.***

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Soderman, and I am Director of Legislative Policy and Strategy for Northeast Utilities Service Company, appearing on behalf of the Connecticut Light and Power Company and Yankee Gas Services Company.

This proposed bill would add advanced practice registered nurses to those in the medical profession that could certify that a resident of a dwelling is seriously ill to include an order to avoid service termination for non-payment. Current law limits the certification process to only registered physicians. When a customer avoids service termination under this law, the unpaid amounts ultimately are paid by all other customers.

We understand that some customers do not have easy access to a registered physician to obtain such certification as currently required. However, we continue to be concerned that there is no financial "means" test to determine eligibility for service termination protection in either current law or the proposed amendment. As of December 2010, CL&P had 9,700 medically protected customers with a total delinquent balance of \$34.8 million, which represents more than one-third of total delinquent balances for categories of delinquent customers. YGS had 700 medically protected customers with a total delinquent balance of \$2.6 million.

This bill should be amended to include the provision of a financial means test so that customers with the ability to pay the cost of the utility service continue to be responsible addressing non-payment. This action would lower utility bills for other customers, including those that are less able to pay.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.